

Note on the date of Nur Qutb Alam's death.—By H. BEVERIDGE, C. S.

I think that we have now got some more light on this vexed question. In my paper on Rajah Káns, I gave the date 851 A. H., which is that mentioned by Mr. Blochmann, and which therefore was probably correct. At the same time, I pointed out that it differed from the date (808) given in the *Aín*, and also from that mentioned in Ravenshaw's *Gaur* (828). I am now convinced that 851 is wrong. It is much too late for one who was a contemporary and fellow-student of Ghiassuddin. I find too that the chronogram *Shams-ul-Hidáyat* referred to by Mr. Blochmann, which gives 851, is apparently a recent invention. As has been pointed out to me by Maulavi Fazl Rubbi, the Divan of the Nawab Bahadur of Murshidabad, Mufti Ghulam Sarwar of Lahore claims,* to be the author of the chronogram. His book, the "*Khazínatu-l-Aşfiyá*" was only published in 1864. It is true he refers to an earlier author Shaikh Hisamuddin of Manikpur, writer of the *Rafik-ul-Arfin*, as giving the date 851, but I have not been able to see that work, and so I do not know what its age and authority are. Ghulam Sarwar says nothing about the date given by Abul Fazl.

The best authority on the point should be the book in possession of the *Khadim*, or Guardian of the Shrine,† at Pandua. The existence of such a book is mentioned in Ravenshaw's *Gaur*, but when I wrote for a copy to Mr. Batabyal, the Magistrate of Maldah, he informed me that the book was reported to have been stolen. However, he has sent me an extract from the late Maulvi Elahi Baksh's history, which supplies the necessary information. Maulvi Elahi Baksh tells us that the inscription "*Kitaba,*" in the possession of the *Khadim*, gives 7 Zilqada 818 as the date, and نور بنور شد, *Nur bnur shud*, as the chronogram. This may be interpreted "*Light went to Light*", or "*Light was with Light*", and is neater and more poetical than the *Shams-ul-Hidáyat* of Ghulam Sarwar. It gives the figures 818 (1415-16).

I submit that this date should be accepted as correct; first because it is that preserved at the shrine; secondly because it is more detailed than the others, as it gives the date of the month as well; and thirdly because it nearly agrees with Abul Fazl's date of 808, and corresponds with history much better than 851. Jalalluddin, the son of Rajah Káns, or Ganes, apparently began to reign about 818, and the *Riyáz* tells us that when he ascended the throne, he sent for Shaikh Zahid, the grandson of Nur Qutb, from Sonargaon, and was henceforth guided by his advice. This implies that Nur Qutb was then dead, or very old, and at all events a man who was a grandfather in 818 is not likely to have lived till 851.

* See his book, page 383.

† It is called the *Chhai Hazari* endowment as consisting of 6,000 bighas.